

# The Cycle of Enactment and Investigation: An Approach for Novice Teacher Educator Professional Development

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## ABSTRACT

Novice teacher educators (NTEs) occupy a complex role of teaching pre-service teachers and typically do not have formalized supports or professional development. This study used the Cycle of Enactment and Investigation (CEI) as framework for NTE professional development. NTEs engaged in a modified CEI that emphasized repeated individual and collective analyses before and after enactments. Findings suggest that this framework allowed the NTEs to engage in the work of a teacher educator with the support of each other and a more experienced teacher educator. This study highlights the need for further research on ways of supporting NTEs.

## KEYWORDS

Cycle of Enactment and Investigation, Novice Teacher Educators, Professional Development

Teacher educators (TEs) are tasked with supporting pre-service teachers' (PSTs') learning about teaching and thus play a critical role in the preparation of quality teachers (Boyd, Harris, & Murray, 2007; Cochran-Smith, 2003; Goodwin & Kosnik, 2013; Smith, 2003; Swennen & van der Klink, 2009). TEs have complex roles at education institutions beyond coursework, that often includes conducting academic research, facilitating school-institution partnerships, and designing curriculum and assessment for PSTs (Cochran-Smith, 2012). TEs can draw on knowledge and previous experiences, which typically includes K-12 classroom teaching (Dinkelman, Margolis, & Sikkenga, 2006; Lunenberg & Hamilton, 2008) and/or graduate degree(s) in education (van Velzen, van der Klink, Swennen, & Yaffe, 2010). Yet, research suggests that, regardless of their backgrounds, TEs often lack the necessary tools to adjust their pedagogies towards adults, rather than children and teenagers (Buchberger, Campos, Kallos, & Stephenson, 2000), and to teach pedagogy rather than subject matter (Ritter, 2007). Furthermore, in most jurisdictions, there are no formal training opportunities for TEs prior to starting this specialized role (Murray, 2005).

Much like how novice teachers face many challenges entering the teaching profession (Darling-Hammond & Barztz-Snowden, 2007; Fantilli & McDougall, 2009), novice teacher educators (NTEs) similarly experience difficulties entering the field of teacher education (Koster & Korthagen, 2001; van Velzen et al., 2010). Though significant attention has been given to creating ways of supporting

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novice teachers and their induction to teaching (Chen, Lin, & Yan, 2018; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Martin, Buelow, & Hoffman, 2016), there is limited research for their NTE counterparts (Dinkelman et al., 2006; Murray, 2005). In spite of the increased calls for support and professional learning opportunities for NTEs, there continues to be a lack of clarity in how NTEs learn within their institutions (William & Ritter, 2010), and whether formalized supports exist. Indeed, the majority of studies on TE development have primarily focused on identity formation (e.g., Butler et al., 2014; McNulty & Cuenca, 2014; Ritter, 2007; Williams & Ritter, 2010; Williams, Ritter, & Bullock, 2012), particularly through self-study (e.g., Casey, & Fletcher, 2012; McNulty & Cuenca, 2014; Ritter, 2007; Williams & Ritter, 2010; Williams et al., 2012). Though these studies do provide crucial insight into TE development through the lens of identity change/formation as well as TEs' own perspectives on their development, this literature does not indicate ways that their learning could have or has been supported outside of their own initiative. Currently, existing educational opportunities for TE focus on self-initiated professional learning through mentorship with colleagues, attending conferences and workshops, and ad hoc communities within institutions (e.g., Smith, 2003; Swennen, Shagrir, & Cooper, 2009). Beyond these examples, there is still a dearth of formalized models of professional development that can serve as inspiration and/or guides for those seeking to support NTEs in their own institutions. Thus, the objective of our study is to explore the use of a guiding framework to support NTEs' professional development.

## **(NOVICE) TEACHER EDUCATOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Professional development initiatives for TE exist in various formats and scopes. Professional organizations such as the Association for Teacher Educators, the Association of Teacher Education in Europe, and the Thematic Network on Teacher Education in Europe offer avenues for presenting and discussing research with fellow TEs (Buchberger et al., 2000; Smith, 2003). In Israel, the MOFET Institute provides coursework and workshops specifically targeted towards supporting TEs in the development of their pedagogies in teacher education (Smith, 2005). Additionally, some institutions offer programs led by expert TEs that foster collaboration, improved professional skills, and community practices for TEs seeking to engage in professional development (Shagrir, 2010). Some institutions offer a combination of formal and informal supports (Hodkinson & Taylor, 2002; Livingston, McCall, & Morgado, 2009; Smith, 2003). For example, departments may organize meetings where TEs share and discuss case studies or video-recorded teaching sessions. Or, TEs may receive feedback on their teaching formally (through course evaluations) or informally (by asking a colleague to do an observation). In spite of the relative success of these varied programs and initiatives, they are not widespread, nor do not specifically target NTEs.

Although limited, research on professional development for NTEs exists (e.g., Amador, 2016; Brody & Hadar, 2015; Dennis, Gelfuso, & Sweeney, 2018). For example, Kosnik and colleagues (2011) facilitated the development of a Beginning Teacher Educators group for NTEs at a Canadian institution. The Beginning Teacher Educators group held frequent meetings that included discussion of teacher education-related research, shared experiences, career paths for TEs, and observation of other (N)TEs. The authors of this study found that participating in this specific initiative led to NTEs developing improved skills as researchers, influenced their identity formation as TEs, and impacted their practices in the classroom. Similarly, the development of a collaborative self-study group at an institution in the United Kingdom, which was borne out of the need for improved induction for NTEs led to improved self-efficacy and positive identity formation as TEs (Jarvis, Dickerson, Chivers, Collins, & Lee, 2012). Notably, the collaborative component between the NTEs, each of whom had varying degrees of prior teaching experience, was critical towards the learning of the group. Jacobs, Yendol-Hoppey, and Dana (2015) described a context in which NTEs in the United States engaged in practitioner inquiry (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009). Through studying their own professional practice, these NTEs developed their understanding of their role as TEs and to innovate their own practices.

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